

Message Text

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ACTION HEW-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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UNCLAS MOSCOW 14204

DEPT. PLEASE PASS HEW FOR OIH AND NIH

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO, SWEL, UR, US

SUBJECT: RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA -- TREATMENT IN USSR FOR MRS. C. L.
TRUMBO -- SENATOR J. L. MCCLELLAN INTEREST

REF: MOSCOW 13506

1. EMBASSY SEPTEMBER 9 RECEIVED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL MAIL LETTER FROM SENATOR JOHN L. MCCLELLAN OF ARKANSAS. LETTER (DATED AUGUST 3 AND POSTMARKED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AUGUST 26) REQUESTS ASSISTANCE FROM AMBASSADOR IN OBTAINING TREATMENT IN USSR FOR U.S. CITIZEN TRUMBO, WHO IS SUFFERING FROM RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA.

2. SCI OFFICER SEPTEMBER 9 INFORMED DR. L. I. MALYSHEV, USSR MINISTRY OF HEALTH, OF SENATOR MCCLELLAN REQUEST ON BEHALF OF TRUMBO. MALYSHEV CONFIRMED THAT TRUMBO CASE COULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF COMPLETE MEDICAL FILE OF PROSPECTIVE PATIENT. THIS PROCEDURE HAS BEEN FOLLOWED IN OTHER REQUESTS BY U.S. CITIZENS FOR TREATMENT OF RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA AT MOSCOW'S HELMHOLTZ INSTITUTE.

3. IN EXPERIENCE OF SCI OFFICE, IT HAS TAKEN OVER TWO MONTHS AFTER RECEIPT OF PATIENT RECORDS TO OBTAIN DECISION FROM USSR MINISTRY OF HEALTH RE ACCEPTABILITY FOR TREATMENT OF U.S. APPLICANT.

4. SENATOR MCCLELLAN IN HIS LETTER SAYS QUOTE IF YOU FIND
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THAT CLINIC AND THE TREATMENT RELIABLE, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT

WE SHOULD DENY MRS. TRUMBO THE CHANCE TO REGAIN HER EYESIGHT.
END QUOTE. EMBASSY BELIEVE IT WISE TO MAKE IT AS CLEAR AS
POSSIBLE THAT USG IS NOT IN POSITION TO SUPPORT OR DENY SOVIET
CLAIMS OF SUCCESS IN TREATMENT OF RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA. DEPT.
MAY WISH TO DRAW ON REFTEL, WHICH ANTICIPATES THIS PROBLEM.

5. IT SHOULD ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT ACCORDING TO THE SOVIETS,
THE HELMHOLTZ INSITUTE TREATMENT QUOTE DOES NOT CURE PIGMENTAL
DEGENERATION OF THE RETINA BUT ONLY ALLOWS THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE Desease AND PROGRESSIVE DEGENERATION OF THE VISUAL
FUNCTIONS TO BE CHECKED IN A NUMBER OF PATIENTS FOR A PERIOD OF
TIME. END QUOTE.

6. THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT RESEARCH TO CONFIRM THIS SOVIET
STATEMENT. SCI OFFICE RECOMMENDS SENATOR MCCLELLAN OR MRS.
TRUMBO REDIRECT QUESTION OF RELIABILITY OF CLINIC AND TREATMENT
(PARA 4 ABOVE) TO DHEW/NIH.

7. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO ASSIST U.S.
APPLICANTS FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION, BUT
QUESTIONS RAISED REFTEL NEED TO BE CONSIDERED BY DEPARTMENT.

8. ACTION: REQUEST EUR/SOV/EXCHANGES CALL SENATOR MCCLELLAN'S
OFFICE WITH ABOVE INFORMATION AND REQUEST TRUMBO SEND EMBASSY
HER MEDICAL FILE THROUGH DEPARTMENT FOR FORWARDING TO
MINISTRY OF HEALTH. LETTER TO MCCLELLAN FROM AMBASSADOR WILL
BE SENT SHORTLY.
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